

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8509

INFO AMCONGEN BELIZE

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USUN NEW YORK 357

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR UNGA BH GT UK

SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE: US POSITION ON UNGA RESOLUTION

REF: A. USUN 4779, B. BELIZE 649

SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT USG IMPRESS STRONGLY ON UK, BELIZE AND GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENTS THE VIEW THAT UNGA RESOLUTION ON BELIZE MUST RECOGNIZE BOTH THE RIGHT OF BELIZEAN PEOPLE TO INDEPENDENCE AND THE NEED FOR CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA. INCLUSION OF REFERENCE TO SELF-DETERMINATION POSES SPECIAL PROBLEM.

1. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT BELIZE REP SHOMAN AND UK MISSION HAVE AGREED ON DRAFT UNGA RESOLUTION ON BELIZE DISPUTE WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO BELMOPAN AND LONDON FOR APPROVAL, AND THAT IF GOVERNMENTS CONCUR IT WILL BE CIRCULATED PROVATELY TO CARRIBBEAN DELEGATIONS AT UN AROUND OCTOBER 16. CLEARLY BEST TIME FOR USG TO INFLUENCE WORKING OF RESOLUTION IS PRIOR TO ITS CIRCULATION TO COUNTRIES NOT PARTY TO REACH A DECISION THAT IT IS IN US INTEREST TO BECOME
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INVOLVED, BEYOND CURRENT GENERAL EXHORTATIONS TO ALL PARTIES TO USE RESTRAINT AND MODERATION.

2. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, AS WE HAVE TOLD GOG, THAT US CAN BEST HELP BOTH SIDES BY NOT TAKING A POSITION ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DISPUTE. US DOES TAKE A POSITION ON THE USE OF FORCE AND WE HAVE COMMUNICATED THAT VIEW IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS. BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT OUT STATED OPPOSITION WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO PREVENT MILITARY CONFLICT IF AN ATTEMPT IS MADE BY BELIZE TO "WIN" IN THE UNGA. PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY WILL BE HOLLOW IF IT CREATES EMOTIONAL CLIMATE WHICH MAKES PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IMPOSSIBLE. EMBASSY THEREFORE BELIEVES THAT PRINCIPAL US INTEREST, PREVENTION OF ARMED CONFLICT AND LASTING EMBITTERMENT OF RELATIONS IN THE AREA THAT SUCH CONFLICT WOULD PRODUCE, CAN ONLY BE PROTECTED BY AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THE TEXT OF UNGA RESOLUTION AND OVERALL BRITISH AND BELIZEAN STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH GUATEMALA.

3. IN OUR VIEW SUCH EFFORT WILL NOT RPT NOT BE EFFECTIVE IF LIMITED OT COUNSELING UK AND BELIZE AGAINST "EXTREME," "IMMODERATE," OR "CONTENTIOUS" RESOLUTION. USG MUST BE PREPARED TO DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS BY MODERATE RESOLUTION AND TO EXPLAIN (A) TO SHON AND PRICE WHY IT IS IN BELIZE'S INTEREST TO SETTLE FOR SOMETHING LESS THAN UNGA ENDORSEMENT OF SELF DETERMINATION AND IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE AND (B) TO GOG WHY BELIZEAN RIGHT OT INDEPENDENCE MUST BE RECOGNIZED. HOPEFULLY HMG WILL ALSO SPEAK FORCEFULLY TO BELIZE AUTHORITIES, BUT SEVERAL REPORTS OF BRITISH VIEWS, MOST RECENTLY REF A, CAST CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DO SO. UK MISSION, AT LEAST, SEEMS MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH STEERING A DIPLOMATICALLY CORRECT COURSE IN UN DEBATE AND NOT APPEARING IN "DISADVANTAGEOUS POSITION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL" THAN IT DOES IN PREVENTING THE SERIOUS SONSEQUENCES OF BRITISH AND LATIN AMERICAN SOLDIERS KILLING EACH OTHER.

4. BRITISH STATEMENT IN REF A THAT "IT IS NOT RPT NOT INTENDED THAT RESOLUTION REFER TO GUATEMALA OR THREATEN USE OF FORCE" APPEARS TO US PARTICULARLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY. NEITHER GUATEMALA NOR US IS CONCERNED ABOUT BRITISH OR BELIZEAN THREAT TO USE FORCE; GOG ASSUMES BELIZEAN TERRITORY WOULD BE DEFENDED AGAINST ATTACK AND WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE

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INTIMIDATED BY UN AFFIRMATION OF THAT FACT. AND IF RESOLUTION DOES NOT REFER TO GUATEMALA AND NEED FOR CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS WITH ITS GOVERNMENT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW GUATEMALAN MILITARY CAN BE ASSURED THAT SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDER WAY WHICH OBTAIN MILITARY ACTION.

5. EMBASSY BELIEVES UNGA RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD PROMOTE RATHER THAN EXTINGUISH CHANCES OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING

ELEMENTS:

(A) AS MINIMUM BELIZE AND ITS ALLIES WOULD ACCEPT, RECOGNITION OF RIGHT OF BELIZEAN PEOPLE TO INDEPENDENCE. GOG WOULD PREFER VAGUER STATEMENTS THAT "ASPIRATIONS OF INHABITANTS OF BELIZE SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT" IN FINAL SETTLEMENT, BUT GOG ITSELF HAS USED PHRASES OF THIS KIND PRECISELY IN ORDER TO PREPARE ITS OWN PEOPLE FOR UNAVOIDABLE FACT THAT THERE WILL EVENTUALLY BE AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE. HOWEVER, USG MAY HAVE TO PRESSURE GOG TO ACCEPT WHAT WILL BE VIEWED HERE AS BITTER PILL. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT GUATEMALAN SCHOOLS FOR DECADES HAVE TAUGHT THAT "BELIZE IS OURS."

(B) AS MINIMUM GUATEMALA WOULD ACCEPT, RECOGNITION THAT DISPUTE BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND UK EXISTS AND CALL UPON BOTH PARTIES TO SEEK PEACEFUL SOLUTION THROUGH CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS. BELIZE WOULD PREFER NOT EVEN TO MENTION NEGOTIATIONS, AND INDEED AS REPORTED REF B SHOMAN'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE "IS TO SECURE ASSISTANCE OF UN TO REMOVE CLAIM OF GUATEMALA TO BELIZEAN TERRITORY." CALL FOR NEGOTIATIONS OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT REMOVE CLAIM, BUT FACT IS GUATEMALA'S CLAIM CANNOT BE REMOVED BY UN AND THIS WILL HAVE TO BE BROUGHT HOME TO BELIZE. THIS IS BELIZE'S BITTER PILL, AND WE SUSPECT ALSO FOR UK, WHICH WOULD PREFER NOT GIVE ANY APPEARANCE OF LEGITIMACY TO GUATEMALAN CLAIM. BUT THIS IS PRICE OF ANY RESOLUTION WHICH DOES NOT PROVOKE WAR: IN ORDER TO OBTAIN (A) BELIZE AND UK MUST CONCEDE (B).

6. MOST DIFFICULT REMAINING ISSUE WILL BE SELF-DETERMINATION. WE NOTE THAT SELF-DETERMINATION WAS NOT MENTIONED IN LIMA NAC RESOLUTION (STATE 209008), AND WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED WHY THIS CONCEPT WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR GOG TO ACCEPT THAN INDEPENDENCE ALONE (GUATEMALA 5215). ON OTHER HAND BOTH BRITISH AND BELIZEAN AUTHORITIES HAVE REFERRED TO IT REPEATEDLY AND US OF ALL COUNTRIES WOULD BE HARD PUT TO ARGUE AGAINST IT. IF BELIZE INSISTS ON INCLUDING IT, FORM OF WORDS WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND TIEING TIMING OF SELF-DETERMINATION TO PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTE WITH GUATEMALA. FORMULATION WILL BE DIFFICULT TO WORK OUT AND NECESSITY OF LINKAGE, CONFIDENTIAL

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ONCE DRIVEN HOME TO BELIZEANS, MAY LESSEN THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR INCLUDING THE CONCEPT. IF SELF-DETERMINATION IS INCLUDED AND LINKAGE IS NOT ESTABLISHED IN RESOLUTION, GOB WILL INTERPRET UN VOTE AS STATED REF B: "HAVING ESTABLISHED RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION INDEPENDENCE OF BELIZE BECOMES SOLELY A DOMESTIC ISSUE FOR BELIZEAN PEOPLE THEMSELVES TO RESOLVE." THIS IS EXACTLY INTERPRETATION GOG FEARS AND WHAT IT APPEARS PREPARED TO GO TO WAR TO PREVENT. MELOY

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